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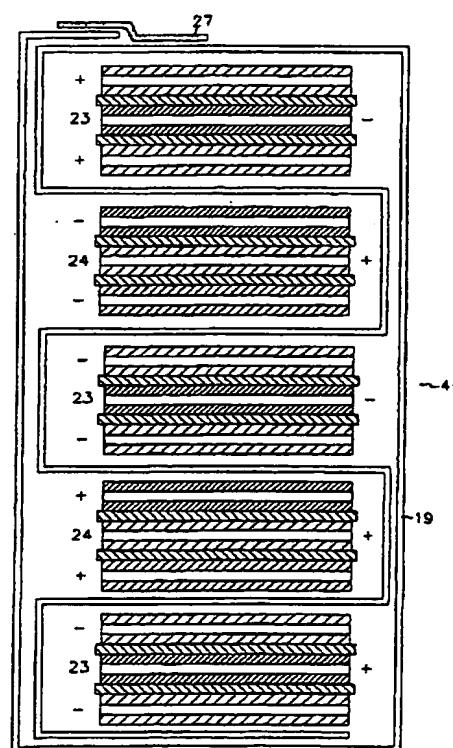
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: MULTIPLY STACKED ELECTROCHEMICAL CELL AND METHOD FOR PREPARING THE SAME



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to an electrochemical element, specifically an electrochemical element with improved energy density comprising stacked electrochemical cells. In order to achieve such objects, the present invention provides an electrochemical element comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked, said electrochemical cells formed by stacking full cells or bicells having a cathode, a separator layer, and an anode sequentially as a basic unit, and a separator film interposed between each stacked cell wherein, said separator film has a unit length which is determined to wrap the electrochemical cells, and folds outward every unit length to fold each electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell and a method for manufacturing the same.

WO 01/59870 A1

WO 01/59870 A1



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MULTIPLY STACKED ELECTROCHEMICAL CELL AND METHOD FOR PREPARING THE SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 (a) Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an electrochemical element and a method of manufacturing the same, specifically to an electrochemical element with improved energy density comprising multiply stacked electrochemical cells and a method of manufacturing the same.

10 (b) Description of the Related Art

There has been growing interest on energy storage technology. The applicable field of the battery has been expanded to cellular phones, camcorders and notebook computers with recent addition of electric vehicles into this list. Such expansion has led to increased research and development 15 of batteries with visible outcomes. In this respect, researches on electrochemical elements are one of the fields that have been receiving much attention, among which rechargeable battery is the central field of interest. Recent developments have turned its way to designing new batteries and electrodes to improve capacity and specific energy.

20 Among the secondary batteries being used, lithium ion battery developed in the 1990s has become increasingly popular because it has higher operating voltage and energy density compared to Ni-MH, Ni-Cd, and sulfuric acid-lead batteries that use aqueous solution electrolyte. These lithium ion batteries, however, have safety problems resulting from the use of organic 25 electrolyte, which causes the batteries to be flammable and explosive. Also, lithium ion has the weakness of having difficult manufacturing process. Recent lithium ion polymer batteries have overcome such shortcomings of the lithium

ion batteries and are anticipated to become the batteries of the next generation. These lithium ion polymer batteries, however, have relatively low capacity compared to lithium ion batteries and have especially insufficient discharging capacity at low temperatures; and thus, need to be improved.

5 The capacity of the batteries is in proportion to the amount of the electrode active materials. Thus, it is extremely important to design a cell structure that can be filled with as much quantities of electrode materials as possible within the limited space of the battery package. The most widely known and used type of cell structure is a jellyroll shaped structure used in a
10 cylindrical or a prismatic battery. Such a structure is prepared by a process of coating and pressing active electrode material onto a metal foil which is used as a current collector, followed by cutting it into a shape of a strip having predetermined width and length, and then separating the anode and cathode using the separator film, and then winding it into a spiral form. Such a jellyroll
15 structure is widely used for manufacturing cylindrical batteries. This structure, however, has small radius of curvature at the center portion of the spiral, which often results in extreme stresses at the bending surface of the electrode, often causing exfoliation of the electrode. This facilitates the deposition of lithium metal at the center portion of the electrode during the repeated charge and
20 discharge of the battery, which may shorten the lifespan of the battery while degrading the safety of the battery.

Generally, the widely known and used method of manufacturing a thin prismatic shaped battery comprises aforesaid process of winding the spiral shaped jelly roll into an oval shape and then compressing it, followed by
25 inserting it into a rectangular container. This method is not free from aforesaid problems of reduced lifespan and safety, but rather has increased problems caused by the decrease in the radius of curvature due to the oval shape. Also,

the problem of reduced performance is greater because manufacturing a tight spiral structure is inherently impossible. Furthermore, discrepancy of the oval shape of the jelly role and the rectangular shape of the container reduces the rate of utilized volume. This is known to reduce approximately 20% of the 5 weight energy density and 25% of the volume energy density when the container is taken into account. In reality, a prismatic lithium ion battery is reported to have lower capacity density and specific energy compared to a cylindrical one.

Recently, various patents and technologies proposing to solve the 10 problems of the spiral jelly roll type structure and providing cell structures suitable for a prismatic container are being published. These proposals, however, only provides partial solution to the problems or causes other problems more difficult to solve so that they have not become a practical solution. For example, U.S. patent No. 5,552,239 describes a process of first 15 placing and laminating a separator layer or polymer electrolyte between the cathode and anode, then cutting it into a form of a strip with predetermined length and width, followed by gradually folding a cell having an anode/separator layer/cathode layered structure into a square form. The inventors of the present invention have tried to replicate such a process but have found out that 20 it was difficult to manufacture the cells for such a use. The laminated cells were so stiff that it was difficult to fold and when it was folded by exerting force, the problem arose in the folded area because it was fractured in a manner similar to the jellyroll typed cells.

In fan-folding method described in U.S. patent No. 5,300,373, the 25 pressure and stresses at the inner layer of the abruptly bending portion are transferred to the outer layer and diverged so that twisting and stretching occur, finally resulting in a "dog bone" shaped cell. Thus, the problems of exfoliations,

cracks, crumbles or snapping, encountered in jelly role type structure also occur frequently. Also, the cells with this structure are inherently prone to snapping; and therefore, the possibility of making a practically applicable battery is very low.

5 Meanwhile, U.S. patent No. 5,498,489 attempted to solve and improve such problems in the bending portions. It provides a fundamental way of avoiding exfoliation of the electrodes by leaving out the electrodes at the folding portions and providing connections only through the use of current collectors and separator layers or polymer electrolyte portions. But, there is difficulty in
10 composing such a cell. Furthermore, too much current collectors are used and the structure wastes too much electrolyte. Thus, the structure is not very practical because it has many inefficient factors.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an objective of the present invention to provide an electrochemical
15 element comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked, wherein it is easy to manufacture, and has a structure making efficient use of the space available and a method of manufacturing the same while considering the prior art.

It is another objective of the present invention to provide an
20 electrochemical element and a method of manufacturing the same that can maximize the content of the active electrode material and can be manufactured easily.

These and other objectives may be achieved by an electrochemical element comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked, said
25 electrochemical cells formed by stacking full cells having a cathode, a separator layer, and an anode sequentially as a basic unit, and a separator film interposed between each stacked full cell wherein,

said separator film has a unit length which is determined to wrap the electrochemical cells, and folds outward every unit length to fold each electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining 5 separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell.

Also, the present invention provides a method of manufacturing an electrochemical element using the full cell comprising the steps of,

a) placing a full cell on and below the separator film continuously or alternately;

10 b) laminating said placed full cells and said separator film of a); and
c) folding outward said laminated full cells and said separator film of b)
to the full cell adjacent next to the first full cell to fold each full cell in a Z-shape
and wrapping the remaining separator film round an outer portion of the stacked
full cell at least once so that each full cell is stacked.

15 Furthermore, the present invention provides an electrochemical element
comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked, said
electrochemical cells formed by stacking,

20 i) a bicell having a cathode; a separator layer; an anode; another
separator layer; and another cathode sequentially as a basic unit; or
ii) a bicell having an anode; a separator layer; a cathode; another
separator layer; and another anode sequentially as a basic unit;
and a separator film interposed between each stacked bicells wherein,
said separator film has a unit length which is determined to wrap the
electrochemical cells, and folds outward every unit length to fold each
25 electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first
spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining
separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell.

Still furthermore, the present invention provides a method of manufacturing an electrochemical element using the bicell comprising the steps of

- a) placing a bicell on and below the separator film continuously or
5 alternately;
- b) laminating said placed bicells and said separator film of a); and
- c) folding outward said laminated bicells and said separator film of b) to
the bicell adjacent next to the first bicell to fold each bicell in a Z-shape and
wrapping the remaining separator film round an outer portion of the stacked
10 bicell at least once so that each bicell is stacked.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 shows a layered structure of a full cell comprising a both-side coated cathode, an anode and a separator layer.

Fig. 2 shows a layered structure of the cell where multiple full cells are
15 stacked and a separator film is interposed between stacked cells.

Fig. 3 shows a layered structure of a cell comprising multiply stacked full cells having a single side of an outermost electrode of an outermost full cell coated and left as a foil, and having a separator film interposed between the full cells.

20 Fig. 4a shows a layered structure of a bicell where a middle layer is an anode and both outer sides are cathodes.

Fig. 4b shows a layered structure of a bicell where a middle layer is a cathode and both outer sides are anodes.

Fig. 5 shows a layered structure of a cell where two types of bicells are
25 alternately stacked with an interposed separator film between the bicells.

Fig. 6 shows a layered structure of a cell comprising bicells having a single side of an outermost electrode of an outermost bicell coated and left as a

foil and two types of bicells are alternately stacked having a separator film interposed between the full cells.

Fig. 7 is a development figure of a battery where full cells are sequentially placed on a cut separator film and then laminated so that the full cells are accurately aligned for stacking.

Fig. 8 is a graph showing a charging and discharging characteristic of the electrochemical element according to the present invention.

Fig. 9 is a development figure of a battery where full cells are sequentially placed on a cut separator film and then laminated so that the full cells are accurately aligned for stacking.

Fig. 10 is a development figure of a battery where bicells are sequentially placed on a cut separator film and then laminated so that the bicells are accurately aligned for stacking.

Fig. 11 shows a cycle characteristic of an electrochemical element according to the present invention.

Fig. 12 is a development figure of a battery where bicells are sequentially placed on a cut separator film and then laminated so that the bicells are accurately aligned for stacking.

20

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Hereinafter, the present invention will be discussed in detail with reference to the figures.

[Function]

The present invention provides a cell structure and a method for the preparation thereof which is more convenient to manufacture and uses space more efficiently compared to conventional cells. The present invention provides a unique but a simple way of maximizing the content of electrode

active material in a prismatic battery while solving various shortcomings of various conventional cell structures discussed above. In principle, the present invention does not make avail of longitudinally cut electrodes used for spiral winding or folding, but rather uses the method of stacking electrodes cut in a 5 predetermined form.

The electrochemical cells according to the present invention are stacked with a full cell or a bicell as a basic unit.

The full cell of the present invention has a structure where a layered construction of a cathode 7, an anode 8 and a separator layer 15 is cut into a 10 regular shape and regular size and then stacked as shown in fig. 1. All the electrodes use current collectors 11 and 12 coated with electrode active material 13 and 14 on both sides. Such a structure is treated as a single unit cell to constitute a battery by stacking. For such a purpose, the electrodes and the separator films must be fixed to each other. For example, in a lithium 15 rechargeable cell, the main component of the cathodic material 14 is lithium intercalation materials such as lithium manganese oxide, lithium cobalt oxide, lithium nickel oxide or a complex oxide formed from a combination of aforesaid oxides, said cathodic material coated on the cathode current collector 12, that is, a foil prepared from aluminum, nickel, or a combination thereof to form a 20 cathode 8. Also the main component of the anodic material 13 is lithium metal or lithium alloy, and lithium intercalation materials such as carbon, petroleum coke, activated carbon, graphite or other carbons, said anode material 13 coated on anode current collector 11, that is, a foil prepared from copper, gold, nickel, copper alloy or a combination thereof to form an anode 7.

25 The separator layer 15 includes a micro-porous polyethylene film, a micro-porous polypropylene film, or a multi-layer film prepared by a combination thereof, or a polymer film for solid polymer electrolyte or gel-type polymer

electrolyte such as polyvinylidene fluoride, polyethylene oxide, polyacrylonitrile or polyvinylidene fluoride hexafluoropropylene copolymer. Furthermore, it is very efficient to use a polymer film for polymer electrolyte including a primary micro-porous polymer layer and a secondary gelling polymer layer of 5 polyvinylidene fluoride-chlorotrifluoroethylene copolymer described in Korean Patent Application No. 99-57312. An important feature needed for the separator layer 15 is a bonding characteristic from laminating for constituting a unit cell which is a full cell.

The unit structure of the full cell 17 shown in Fig. 1 is composed of a 10 cathode, a separator layer, and an anode sequentially. The separator layer 15 is naturally placed in the center of the cell. A plurality of these unit cells can be stacked in a number desired to implement a battery with practical capacity. For example, fig. 2 shows five full cells sequentially stacked. The way of 15 interposing a polymer separator layer or a polymer separator film having micro porous for polymer electrolyte is extremely important as explained above for separator layer 15 and fig. 2 shows a way the present invention provides.

The full cells 17 of the present invention are stacked by folding the longitudinally cut separator film 19 in a Z-shape starting from a full cell and then stacked one by one. Such a structure becomes a very efficient structure 20 because the outer active coating material not used within a unit cell is shared with opposite electrode active coating material of another adjacent unit cell. The separator film 19 is finished by fixing a tape 27 after finishing the folding and wrapping once around the full cells. Furthermore, the finishing can use 25 thermo-fusing besides taping. That is, the separator film itself is fixed and bonded by heat-sealing which carry out bring a thermo-welding machine, a hot plate, or etc into contact with the separator film. The number of full cells to be stacked is determined according to the desired capacity of the finished battery.

In the present invention, the structure 44 of fig. 2 has another meaning. According to the experience of the inventors of the present invention, the surfaces between the separator films such as film for polymer electrolyte film or the polymer separator layer and electrodes are important. When the battery is 5 actually used after injecting liquid electrolyte and packaging, it is subject to numerous charging and discharging cycle. When the contact of the surface is not constantly maintained and becomes unstable, the performance of the battery drops suddenly and actual capacity of the battery decreases. According to the structure of the battery, this effect can be shown from the 10 beginning or can be revealed as time passes by. Therefore, there is a need to exert pressure to constantly maintain the surfaces. The present invention provides a new cell structure and method of assembling as a way of maintaining the pressure while fundamentally solving above problem. In this context, fig. 2 has another meaning.

15 As can be seen in structure 44 of fig. 2, a way of stacking the unit cells of full cells while folding the separator film 19 in a Z-shape efficiently uses the electrodes between the full cells. Pressure formed by wrapping the full cells once around after the folding presses surfaces between the polymer film of the polymer electrolyte or the polymer separator layer and the electrodes formed by 20 all the cells. A final finishing using a tape 27 is a measure to constantly maintain such a pressure, which allows stable and constant contact between the surfaces.

25 A different material or same material of polymer separator layer or polymer film for polymer electrolyte can be used for a separator layer 15 and separator film 19. The separator layer 15 must have bonding characteristic from laminating to constitute a unit cell which is a full cell, but the separator film 19 does not need to have such a characteristic because it is possible to fold the full

cells 17 by the separator film 19 for assembling. But, for another type of assembling using a cell structure as shown in structure 44 of fig. 2, it is preferable to use the separator film 19 that also has the bonding characteristic. In this respect, it may be most appropriate to use the polymer film for polymer electrolyte as a separator film 19 comprising a first micro-porous polymer layer and a second gelling polymer layer of polyvinylidene fluoride-chlorotrifluoroethylene copolymer for the battery according to the present invention. When the new polymer film is used as the separator film 19, there can be a large variety of assembling method in structure 44 of fig. 2. That is,

5 every full cell 17 has two possible directions, that is the upper direction and the lower direction for bonding to the separator film 19. If there are five full cells as in fig. 2, there can be 2^5 kinds of ways of assembling. In such a method, after the separator film 19 is spread in a longitudinal direction, full cells are disposed in upper or lower side of the separator film 29 according to any of the 2^5 ways,

10 and then laminated followed by simply folding in a Z-shape and wrapping once around. The merit of this method is the facility of assembling process of designing and disposing.

15

Fig. 3 shows structure 45 which eliminates the unused outermost active electrode material from the structure 44 of fig. 2 so that the structure has the maximum space efficiency. When another full cell 17' is defined as a full cell structure having one electrode coated on both sides and the other electrode coated on a single side, structure 45 of fig. 3 adopts such a full cell 17' so that the outermost active electrode material not used is left as a foil as shown in structure 44 of fig. 2. This results in the additional decrease in the thickness without losing the capacity so that the space efficiency is increased furthermore. But, when the stacked cells are increased, it does not show much difference in space utilization efficiency compared to the structure 44 of fig. 2. Nevertheless,

structure 45 of fig. 3 is effective in a very thin layer card typed battery recently being discussed.

In the present invention, when a plurality of bicells is stacked as a unit cell, the space efficient cell structure is applied in a manner identical to the 5 above method. For such a purpose, two types of bicells 23 and 24 are respectively defined both of which uses a both-side coated electrode as shown in fig. 4a and 4b. The bicell 23 has an anode placed in the middle and cathodes placed in both outer sides whereas the bicell 24 has a cathode placed in the middle and anodes placed in both outer sides. The usable active electrode 10 material and polymer separator layer or polymer film for polymer electrolyte as a separator layer 15 is same in detail as discussed above in the full cells.

The structure 46 of fig. 5 shows a way of constituting a battery using two types of bicells as basic unit cells. When the bicell 23 and 24 are alternately stacked, and aforementioned polymer separator layer or separator film 19 such 15 as polymer film for polymer electrolyte are inserted between the bicells in a Z-shape folding manner, the outer active coating material not used within a bicell is naturally shared with an opposite polarity of another type of adjacent bicell, forming a new full cell which has a very efficient structure. As can be seen in structure 46 of fig 5, if the separator films 19 are interposed continuously 20 between the cells and the bicells are alternately stacked, the polarity of the battery is naturally formed without discrepancy. The outermost stacked bicell of the battery can be either bicell 23 or bicell 24, the only difference being whether the unused electrode material is an anode or a cathode. The proportion of such unused electrodes decreases as the number of stacks 25 increases and for electrode with a practical thickness, only has little influence. In other structure 46, the way and structure of inserting the separator film 19 is identical to those of full cell in every detail and the separator film 19 and tape 27

functioning under such a structure also has the same meaning.

Fig. 6 shows a structure 47 eliminating the outermost active electrode material from the structure 46 of fig. 5 so that the structure has a maximum space efficiency. When the primes(') denote structures where only one out of 5 two outer electrodes of the bicell is left as the foil, a structure stacking a bicell 23' as the outermost bicell of the battery (it does not matter whether the outermost bicell is bicell 23' or bicell 24') as in structure 47 of fig. 6 leaves the unused portion of the outermost active electrode material as the foil so that the thickness is further reduced not losing the space efficiency. This allows the 10 merit of directly being related to the space efficiency. When the layers of bicells being stacked increase, it does not show much difference from structure 46 of fig. 5 in terms of the space efficiency. In a thin layer card typed battery, however, the structure of stacked cell 47 of fig. 6 is effective.

The battery structure provided in the present invention is very effective 15 for a prismatic battery. Generally, liquid electrolyte is injected when packaging. For such a purpose, aluminum prismatic can or an aluminum laminate film can be used as a container. The liquid electrolyte is a salt of A^+B^- dissolved or dissociated in an organic solvent wherein the A^+ comprises an alkaline metal cation such as Li^+ , Na^+ , or K^+ or combination thereof, the B^- comprises an anion 20 PF_6^- , BF_4^- , Cl^- , Br^- , I^- , ClO_4^- , ASF_6^- , $CH_3CO_2^-$, $CF_3SO_3^-$, $N(CF_3SO_2)_2^-$ or $C(CF_2SO_2)_3^-$ or combination thereof and the organic solvent comprises propylene carbonate(PC), ethylene carbonate(EC), diethyl carbonate(DEC), dimethyl carbonate(DMC), dipropyl carbonate(DPC), dimethyl sulfoxide, acetonitrile, dimethoxyethane, diethoxyethane, tetrahydrofuran, N-methyl-2- 25 pyrrolidone(NMP), ethylmethyl carbonate(EMC), or γ -butyrolactone or combination thereof. Unlike a jelly roll of a lithium ion battery, the constituents of the battery according to the present invention have a form coinciding with the

form of the quadrilateral container so that there will be no unused space within the container. Therefore, the energy density of the battery can be greatly increased to implement a highly integrated battery having maximized spatial efficiency of active materials.

5 The electrochemical element of the present invention can be applied to the various fields such as supercapacitors, ultracapacitors, primary batteries, secondary batteries, fuel cells, sensors, electrolysis devices, electrochemical reactors, and etc, besides lithium secondary batteries.

10 The present invention will be explained in detail with reference to the examples. These examples, however, should not in any sense be interpreted as limiting the scope of the present invention.

[Examples]

Example 1

15 Preparing a stacked cell where a full cell is a basic unit

(Preparing a cathode)

LiCoO₂: carbon black: PVDF, of which the weight ratio was 95: 2.5: 2.5, was dispersed in NMP in order to prepare slurry, and then the slurry was coated on an aluminum foil. After sufficiently drying at 130 °C, the cathode was 20 prepared by pressing.

A cathode of the full cell was prepared by coating the slurry on both sides of aluminum foil. That is, the cathode has a cathodic material coated on both sides of the aluminum cathode current collector. The thickness of the both-side coated cathode was 140μm.

25 (Preparing an anode)

Graphite: acetylene black: PVDF, of which the weight ratio was 93: 1: 6, was dispersed in NMP in order to prepare slurry, and then the slurry was coated

on a copper foil. After sufficiently drying at 130 °C, the anode was prepared by pressing.

An anode of the full cell was prepared by coating the slurry on both sides of copper foil. That is, the anode has an anodic material coated on both 5 sides of the copper anode current collector. The thickness of the both-side coated anode was 135μm.

(Preparing a separator layer; a separator film; a polymer film for polymer electrolyte)

A multi-layer polymer film was prepared wherein polypropylene film 10 having a microporous structure and a thickness of 16 μm was a first polymer separator layer and polyvinylidene fluoride-chlorotrifluoroethylene copolymer 32008(Solvay) was a second gelling polymer. 6 g of the 32008 was added to 194 g of acetone and stirred at 50 °C. After 1 hour, the completely dissolved transparent 32008 solution was coated on the polypropylene first polymer 15 separator layer by a dip coating process. The thickness of coated 32008 was 1 μm and the thickness of the final multi-layered polymer film was 18 μm. Here, a same material was used for the separator layer and the separator film.

(Preparing a full cell)

Seven full cells 17 of Fig. 1 were prepared by cutting the cathode 20 having cathodic material coated on both sides of a cathode current collector to the size of 2.9 cm x 4.3 cm of rectangle, except for the area where a tab was to be formed(the area where a tab was to be formed should not be coated with electrode material), cutting the anode having anodic material coated on both sides of an anode current collector to the size of 3.0 cm x 4.4 cm of rectangle, 25 except the area where a tab was to be formed(the area where a tab was to be formed should not be coated with electrode material), cutting a multi-layered polymer film prepared in a manner mentioned above to the size of 3.1 cm x 4.5

cm, interposing the above film between the anode and the cathode, and passing it through a roll laminator of 100 °C to laminate the electrodes and the separator layer.

(Stacking full cells)

5 After preparing the polymer film 19 for the polymer electrolyte manufactured as above by cutting longitudinally, the seven full cells were disposed alternately on and below the separator film 19 as shown in fig. 7a. Fig. 7b is a drawing showing the side of fig. 7a. The gaps between each cell were spaced equally but enough that the cells could be stacked and separated
10 by the separator film in a Z-shape. The polarity of the tab was disposed as in fig. 7a and 7b so that it coincided with the polarities of the neighboring full cells. That is, the direction of the electrodes of the first full cells placed on and below the separator film 19 was disposed in the sequence of cathode and then the anode, and the direction of the electrodes of the second full cell and next full
15 cells was disposed alternately below and on the separator film in the reverse order.

The polymer film 19 having the full cells placed thereon was passed through a roll laminator so that the full cells were bonded on and below the polymer film 19.

20 The bonded full cell 17 of the first spot was folded into a Z-shape. After the folding was finished, the remaining separator film 19 wrapped the outer side of the stacked full cells once and was fixed and secured tightly by a tape 27.

(Preparing a battery)

The full cell stacked battery prepared as above was placed within the
25 aluminum laminate package. Then the liquid electrolyte comprising 1:2 weight ratio of EC/EMC of 1 M LiPF₆ was injected and packaged.

(Evaluation)

Using the charging and discharging experiment, the evaluation of the cycle characteristic of the battery is shown in fig. 8. Reference numeral 102 shows the cycle characteristic of the manufactured battery where 0.2C is charged and 0.2 C is discharged.

5

Example 2

Preparing a stacked cell where a full cell is a basic unit

(Preparing a cathode)

Each cathode was prepared in a manner identical to the example 1.

10

(Preparing an anode)

Each anode was prepared in a manner identical to the example 1.

(Preparing a separator layer; a separator film; a polymer film for polymer electrolyte)

Each separator layer and polymer film for polymer electrolyte for separator film was prepared in a manner identical to the example 1.

(Preparing a full cell)

The eight full cells 17 of Fig. 1 were prepared by passing through a roll laminator of 100 °C to laminate the electrodes and the separator layer as in example 1.

20

(Stacking full cells)

After preparing the polymer film 19 for the polymer electrolyte manufactured as above by cutting longitudinally, the eight full cells were disposed on or below the separator film 19 as shown in fig. 9a. Fig. 9b is a drawing showing the side of fig. 9a. The gaps between each cell were spaced 25 equally but enough that the cells could be stacked and separated by the separator film in a Z-shape where the distance was the addition of width and thickness of the full cell. The polarity of the tab was disposed as in fig. 9a and

9b so that it coincided with the polarities of the neighboring full cells. That is, the direction of the electrodes of the first full cells placed on and below the separator film 19 was disposed in the sequence of cathode and then the anode identically, and the direction of the electrodes of the second full cell and next full 5 cells was disposed below and on the separator film 19 in the reverse order.

The polymer film 19 having the full cells placed thereon was passed through a roll laminator so that the full cells were bonded on and below the polymer film 19.

- The bonded full cell 17 of the first spot was folded into a Z-shape.
- 10 After the folding was finished, the remaining separator film 19 wrapped the outer side of the stacked full cells once and was fixed and secured tightly by a tape 27.

(Preparing a battery)

- The full cell stacked battery prepared as above was placed within the aluminum laminate package. Then the liquid electrolyte comprising 1:2 weight 15 ratio of EC/EMC of 1 M LiPF₆ was injected and packaged.

(Evaluation)

- Using the charging and discharging experiment, the evaluation of the cycle characteristic of the battery is shown in fig. 8. Reference numeral 103 shows the cycle characteristic of the manufactured battery where 0.2C is 20 charged and 0.2 C is discharged.

Example 3

Preparing a stacked cell where a bicell is a basic unit

(Preparing a cathode)

- 25 Each cathode was prepared according to the method same as the above example 1.

A cathode of the bicell was prepared by coating the slurry on both sides

of aluminum foil. That is, the cathode has a cathodic material coated on both sides of the aluminum cathode current collector. The thickness of the both-side coated cathode was 140 μ m.

(Preparing an anode)

5 Each anode was prepared according to the method same as the above example 1.

An anode of the bicell was prepared by coating the slurry on both sides of copper foil. That is, the anode has an anodic material coated on both sides of the copper anode current collector. The thickness of the both-side coated anode 10 was 135 μ m.

(Preparing a separator layer; a separator film; a polymer film for polymer electrolyte)

The separator layers, separator films, and polymer film for polymer electrolyte were prepared in a manner identical to the example 1.

15 (Preparing a bicell)

The cathode having aforesaid cathodic material coated on both sides of the cathode current collector was cut to the size of 2.9 cm x 4.3 cm of rectangle, except for the area where a tab was to be formed. The anode having anodic material coated on both sides of the anode current collector was cut to the size 20 of 3.0 cm x 4.4 cm of rectangle, except for the area where a tab was to be formed.

Four bicells 23 of Fig. 4a were prepared by placing both-side coated anode in the middle and the both-side coated cathodes at both outer sides, placing a multi-layered polymer film prepared according to the aforesaid manner 25 which was cut into the size of 3.1 cm x 4.5 cm between each anode and each cathode, and passing it through a roll laminator of 100 °C to thermofuse the electrodes and the separator layer. Other bicells, that is, three bicells 24 of Fig.

4b were prepared by placing the both-side coated cathode in the middle and the both-side coated anodes at both outer sides, placing a multi-layered polymer film prepared according to the aforesaid manner which was cut into the size of 3.1 cm x 4.5 cm between each anode and each cathode, and passing it through 5 a roll laminator of 100 °C to laminate the electrodes and the separator layer.

(Stacking bicells)

After preparing the polymer film 19 for the polymer electrolyte manufactured as above by cutting longitudinally, four bicells 23 and three bicells 24 prepared as above were placed on the separator film 19 and below the film 10 respectively. Fig. 10b is a drawing showing the side of fig. 10a. The gaps between each cell were spaced equally but enough that the cells could be stacked and separated by the separator film in a Z-shape. The polarity of the tab was disposed as in fig. 10a and 10b so that it coincided with the polarities of the neighboring bicells. That is, the direction of the electrodes of the first bicell 15 placed on the separator film 19 was disposed in the sequence of cathode and then the anode, and the direction of the electrodes of the second bicell and next bicells was disposed alternately below and on the separator film 19 in the reverse order.

The polymer film 19 having the bicells placed thereon was passed 20 through a roll laminator so that the bicells were bonded on and below the polymer film 19.

The bonded bicell 23 of the first spot was folded into a Z-shape. After the folding was finished, the remaining separator film 19 wrapped the outer side of the stacked bicells once and was fixed and secured tightly by a tape 27.

25 (Preparing a battery)

The stacked bicell battery prepared as above was placed within the aluminum laminate package. Then the liquid electrolyte comprising 1:2 of

EC/EMC of 1 M LiPF₆ was injected and packaged.

(Evaluation)

Using the charging and discharging experiment, the evaluation of the cycle characteristic of the battery is shown in fig. 11. Reference numeral 104 5 shows the cycle characteristic of the manufactured battery where 0.2C is charged and discharged at first and second time followed by 0.5C charges/1C discharges from the third time from which it is illustrated on the graph.

Example 4

10 Preparing a stacked cell where a bicell is a basic unit

(Preparing a cathode)

Each cathode was prepared according to the method same as the above example 1.

(Preparing an anode)

15 Each anode was prepared according to the method same as the above example 1.

(Preparing a separator layer; a separator film; a polymer film for polymer electrolyte)

20 The separator layers and separator film, that is, polymer film for polymer electrolyte were prepared in a manner identical to the example 1.

(Preparing a bicell)

Four bicells 23 and four bicells 24 were prepared as in example 3.

(Stacking bicells)

25 After preparing the polymer film 19 for the polymer electrolyte manufactured as above by cutting longitudinally, four bicells 23 and four bicells 24 prepared as above were placed on the same location of the separator film 19 with the bicell 24 upper side and the bicell 24 lower side so that the bicell 23

and the bicell 24 were placed alternately as shown in fig. 12a. Fig. 12b is a drawing showing the side of fig. 12a. The gaps between each cell were spaced equally but enough that the cells could be stacked and separated by the separator film in a Z-shape where the distance was the addition of width and thickness of the bicell. The polarity of the tab was disposed as in fig. 12a and 12b so that it coincided with the polarities of the neighboring bicells. That is, the direction of the electrodes of the first bicells placed on and below the separator film 19 was disposed in the sequence of cathode and then the anode identically, and the direction of the electrodes of the second bicell and next 10 bicells was disposed below and on the separator film 19 in the reverse order.

The polymer film 19 having the bicells placed thereon was passed through a roll laminator so that the bicells were bonded on and below the polymer film 19.

The bonded bicell 17 of the first spot was folded into a Z-shape. After 15 the folding was finished, the remaining separator film 19 wrapped the outer side of the stacked bicells once and was fixed and secured tightly by a tape 27.

(Preparing a battery)

The stacked bicell battery prepared as above was placed within the aluminum laminate package. Then the liquid electrolyte comprising 1:2 of 20 EC/EMC of 1 M LiPF₆ was injected and packaged.

(Evaluation)

Using the charging and discharging experiment, the evaluation of the cycle characteristic of the battery is shown in fig. 11. Reference numeral 105 shows the cycle characteristic of the manufactured battery where 0.2C is charged and discharged at first and second time followed by 0.5C charges/1C 25 discharges from the third time from which it is illustrated on the graph.

The electrochemical element according to the present invention multiply stacked with full cells or bicells as a unit cell is easy to manufacture, has a structure which uses the space available efficiently, and can especially maximize the content of the active electrode material so that a highly integrated 5 battery can be implemented.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An electrochemical element comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked, said electrochemical cells formed by stacking full cells having a cathode, a separator layer, and an anode sequentially as a basic unit, and a separator film interposed between each stacked full cell wherein,
 - 5 said separator film has a unit length which is determined to wrap the electrochemical cells, and folds outward every unit length to fold each electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell.
 - 10 2. The electrochemical element according to claim 1, wherein an outermost end of said separator film is fixed by taping.
 3. The electrochemical element according to claim 1, wherein an outermost end of said separator film is fixed by heat-sealing.
 - 15 4. The electrochemical element according to claim 1, wherein said separator film is selected from a group consisting of a micro-porous polyethylene film, a micro-porous polypropylene film, or a multi-layer film prepared by a combination thereof, and a polymer film for polymer electrolyte of polyvinylidene fluoride, polyethylene oxide, polyacrylonitrile, or polyvinylidene fluoride hexafluoropropylene copolymer.
 - 20 5. The electrochemical element according to claim 4, wherein said polymer film for polymer electrolyte comprises a primary micro-porous polymer layer and a secondary gelling polymer layer of polyvinylidene fluoride-chlorotrifluoroethylene copolymer.
 - 25 6. The electrochemical element according to claim 1, wherein said each cathode of the full cell is an electrode coated with a cathodic material on both sides of a cathode current collector, and said each anode is an electrode

coated with an anodic material on both sides of an anode current collector.

7. The electrochemical element according to claim 1, wherein each full cell placed in the outermost side of said electrochemical cell comprises a cathode coated with a cathodic material on a single side of a cathode current, or 5 an anode coated with an anodic material on a single side of an anode current collector, and a current collector foil is placed in the outermost side.

8. A method of manufacturing an electrochemical element comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked and filled within a battery case, said electrochemical cells formed by stacking full cells having a 10 cathode, a separator layer, and an anode sequentially as a basic unit, and a separator film having a unit length which is determined to wrap the electrochemical cells and folding outward every unit length to fold each electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining 15 separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell, said separator film interposed between each stacked full cell comprising the steps of,

a) placing a full cell on and below the separator film continuously or alternately;
b) laminating said placed full cells and said separator film of a); and
20 c) folding outward said laminated full cells and said separator film of b) to the full cell adjacent next to the first full cell to fold each full cell in a Z-shape and wrapping the remaining separator film round an outer portion of the stacked full cell at least once so that each full cell is stacked.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising a step of d)
25 fixing the end of said separator film by taping.

10. The method according to claim 8, further comprising a step of e)
fixing the end of said separator film by heat sealing which carry out bring a

thermo-welding machine, or a hot plate into contact with the separator film.

11. The method according to claim 8, wherein said each full cell of
a) is placed on or below the separator film.

12. An electrochemical element comprising electrochemical cells
5 which are multiply stacked, said electrochemical cells formed by stacking
i) a bicell having a cathode; a separator layer; an anode; another
separator layer; and another cathode sequentially as a basic unit; or
ii) a bicell having an anode; a separator layer; a cathode; another
separator layer; and another anode sequentially as a basic unit;
10 and a separator film interposed between each stacked bicells wherein,

said separator film has a unit length which is determined to wrap the
electrochemical cells, and folds outward every unit length to fold each
electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first
spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining
15 separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell.

13. The electrochemical element according to claim 12, wherein an
outermost end of said separator film is fixed by taping.

14. The electrochemical element according to claim 12, wherein an
outermost end of said separator film is fixed by heat-sealing.

20 15. The electrochemical element according to claim 12, wherein
said separator film is selected from a group consisting of a micro-porous
polyethylene film, a micro-porous polypropylene film, or a multi-layer film
prepared by a combination thereof, and a polymer film for polymer electrolyte of
polyvinylidene fluoride, polyethylene oxide, polyacrylonitrile, or polyvinylidene
25 fluoride hexafluoropropylene copolymer.

16. The electrochemical element according to claim 15, wherein
said polymer film for polymer electrolyte comprises a primary micro-porous

polymer layer and a secondary gelling polymer layer of polyvinylidene fluoride-chlorotrifluoroethylene copolymer.

17. The electrochemical element according to claim 12, wherein said electrochemical cells are formed by alternately stacking i) a bicell having a cathode; a separator layer; an anode; another separator layer; and another cathode sequentially; and ii) a bicell having an anode; a separator layer; a cathode; another separator layer; and another anode sequentially.

18. The electrochemical element according to claim 12, wherein said each cathode of the bicell is an electrode coated with a cathodic material on both sides of a cathode current collector, and said each anode is an electrode coated with an anodic material on both sides of an anode current collector.

19. The electrochemical element according to claim 12, wherein each bicell placed in the outermost side of said electrochemical cell comprises a cathode coated with a cathodic material on a single side of a cathode current collector, or an anode coated with an anodic material on a single side of an anode current collector, and a current collector foil is placed in the outermost side.

20. A method of manufacturing an electrochemical element comprising electrochemical cells which are multiply stacked, said electrochemical cells formed by alternately stacking i) a bicell having a cathode; a separator layer; an anode; another separator layer; and another cathode sequentially as a basic unit; or ii) a bicell having an anode; a separator layer; a cathode; another separator layer; and another anode sequentially as a basic unit; and a separator film having a unit length which is determined to wrap the electrochemical cells and folding outward every unit length to fold each electrochemical cell in a Z-shape starting from the electrochemical cell of a first

spot to the electrochemical cell of the last spot continuously while the remaining separator film wraps an outer portion of the stacked cell, said separator film interposed between each stacked bicell comprising the steps of,

- a) placing a bicell on and below the separator film continuously or
5 alternately;
- b) laminating said placed bicells and said separator film of a); and
- c) folding outward said laminated bicells and said separator film of b) to
the bicell adjacent next to the first bicell to fold each bicell in a Z-shape and
wrapping the remaining separator film round an outer portion of the stacked
10 bicell at least once so that each bicell is stacked.

21. The method according to claim 20, further comprising a step of
d) fixing the end of said separator film by taping.

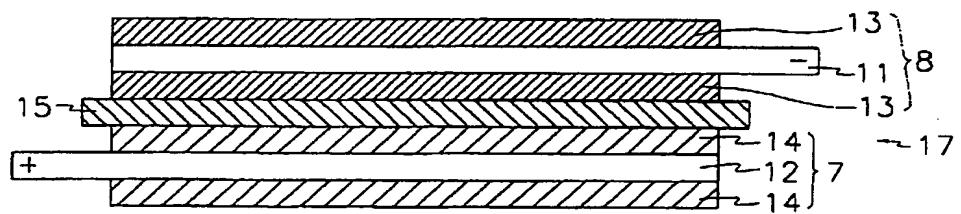
22. The method according to claim 20, further comprising a step of
e) fixing the end of said separator film by heat sealing which carry out bring a
15 thermo-welding machine, or a hot plate into contact with the separator film.

23. The method according to claim 20, wherein said each bicell of
a) is placed on or below the separator film.

24. The method according to claim 20, wherein said electrochemical
cells are formed by alternately stacking i) a bicell having a cathode; a separator
20 layer; an anode; another separator layer; and another cathode sequentially; and
ii) a bicell having an anode; a separator layer; a cathode; another separator
layer; and another anode sequentially.

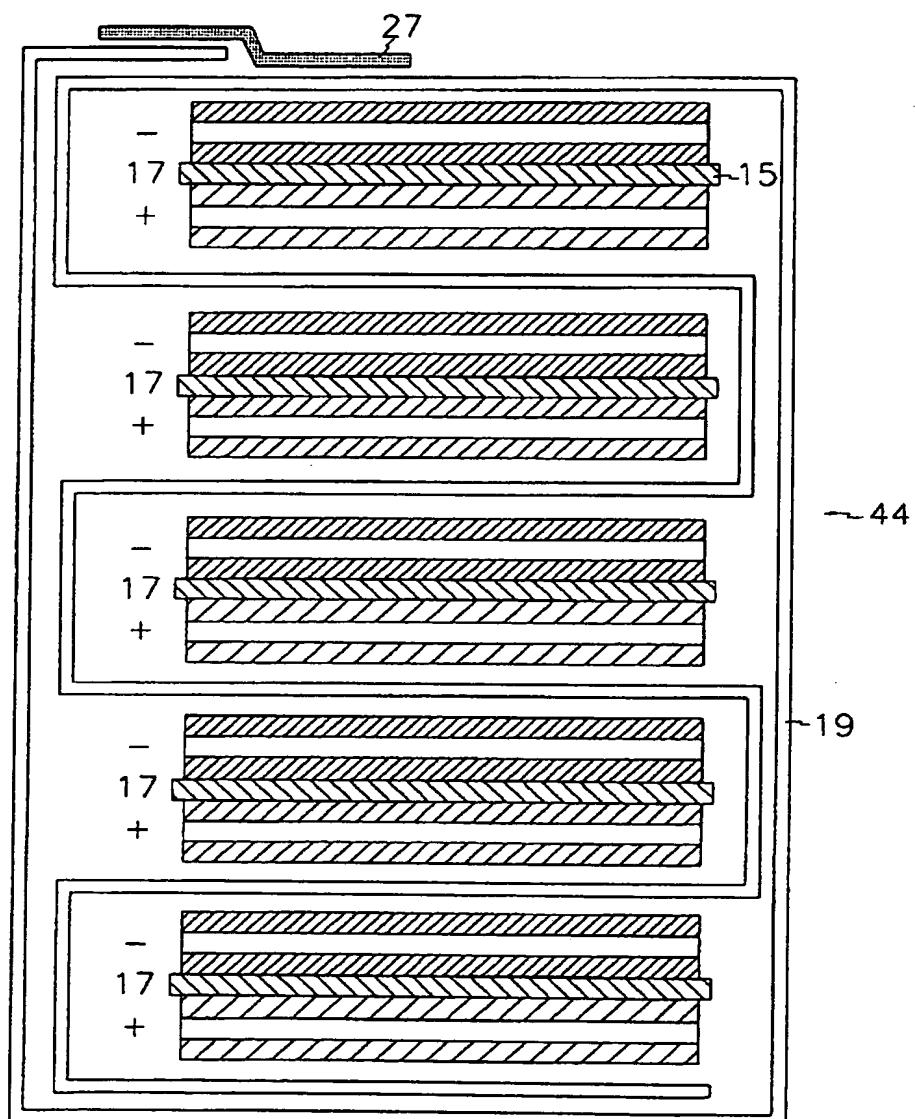
1 / 12

FIG.1



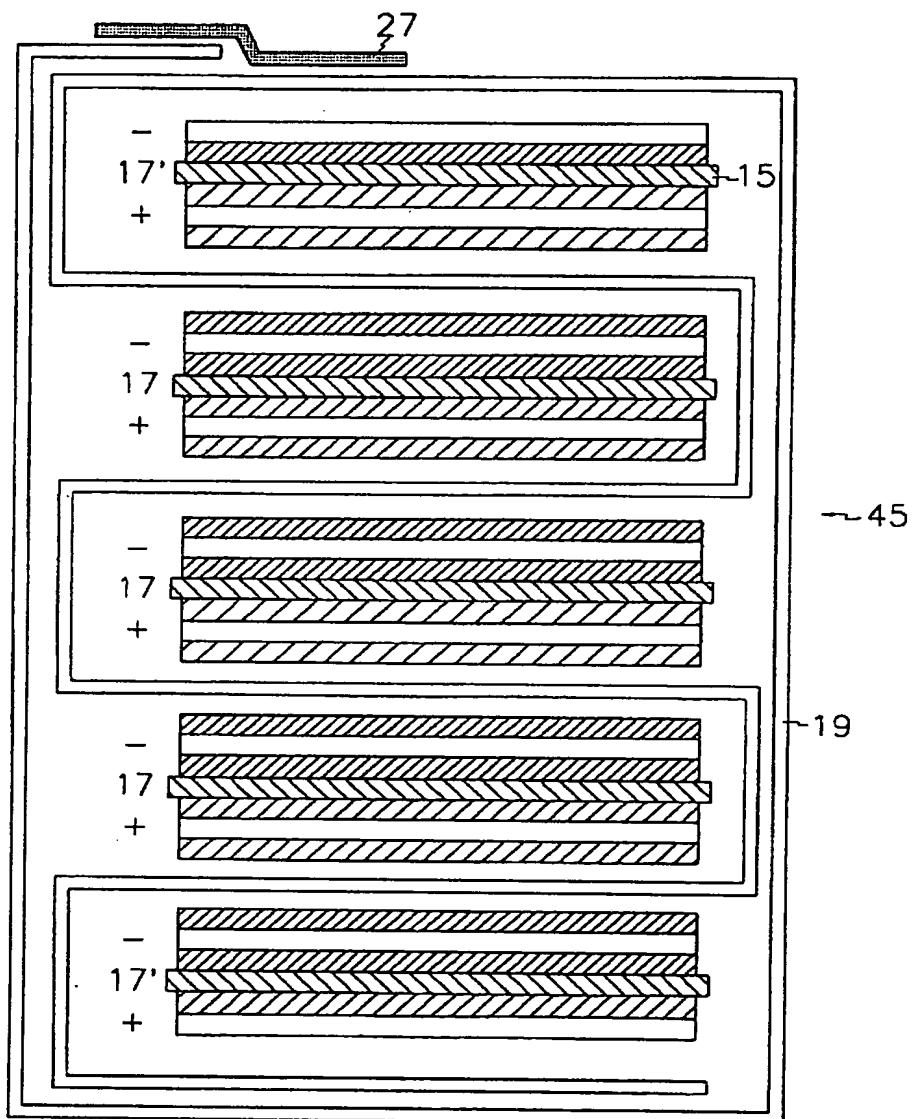
2 / 12

FIG.2



3 / 12

FIG.3



4 / 12

FIG.4A

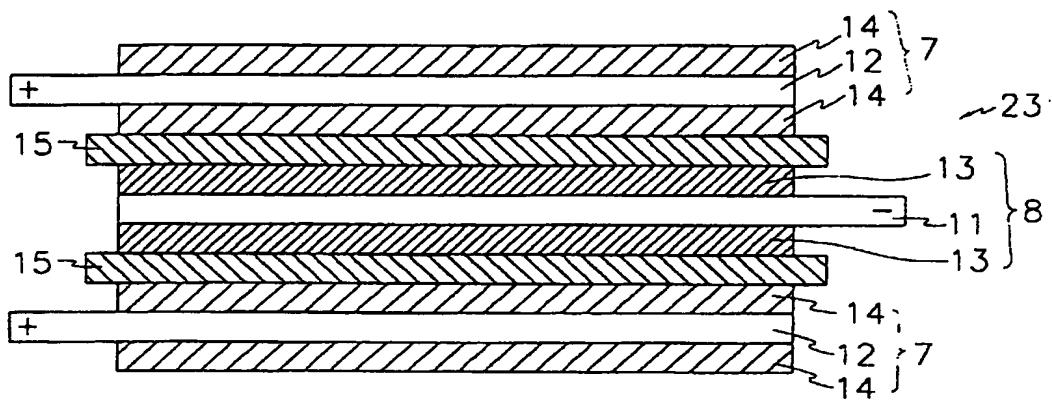
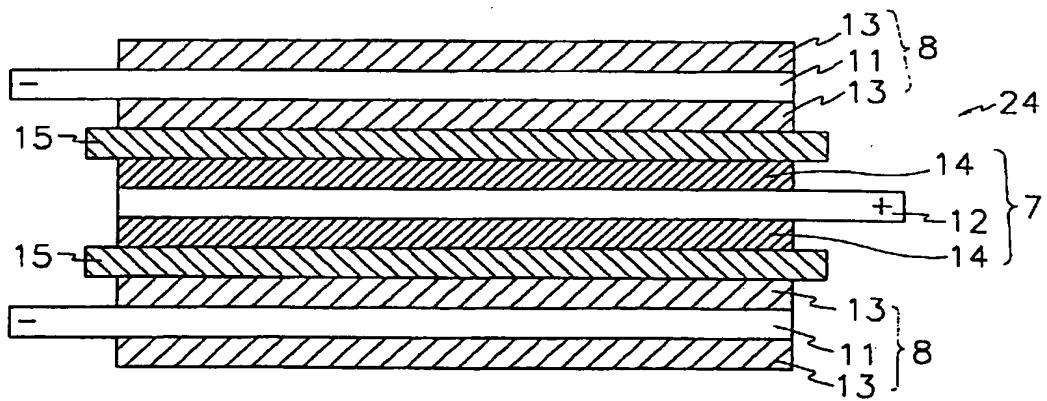
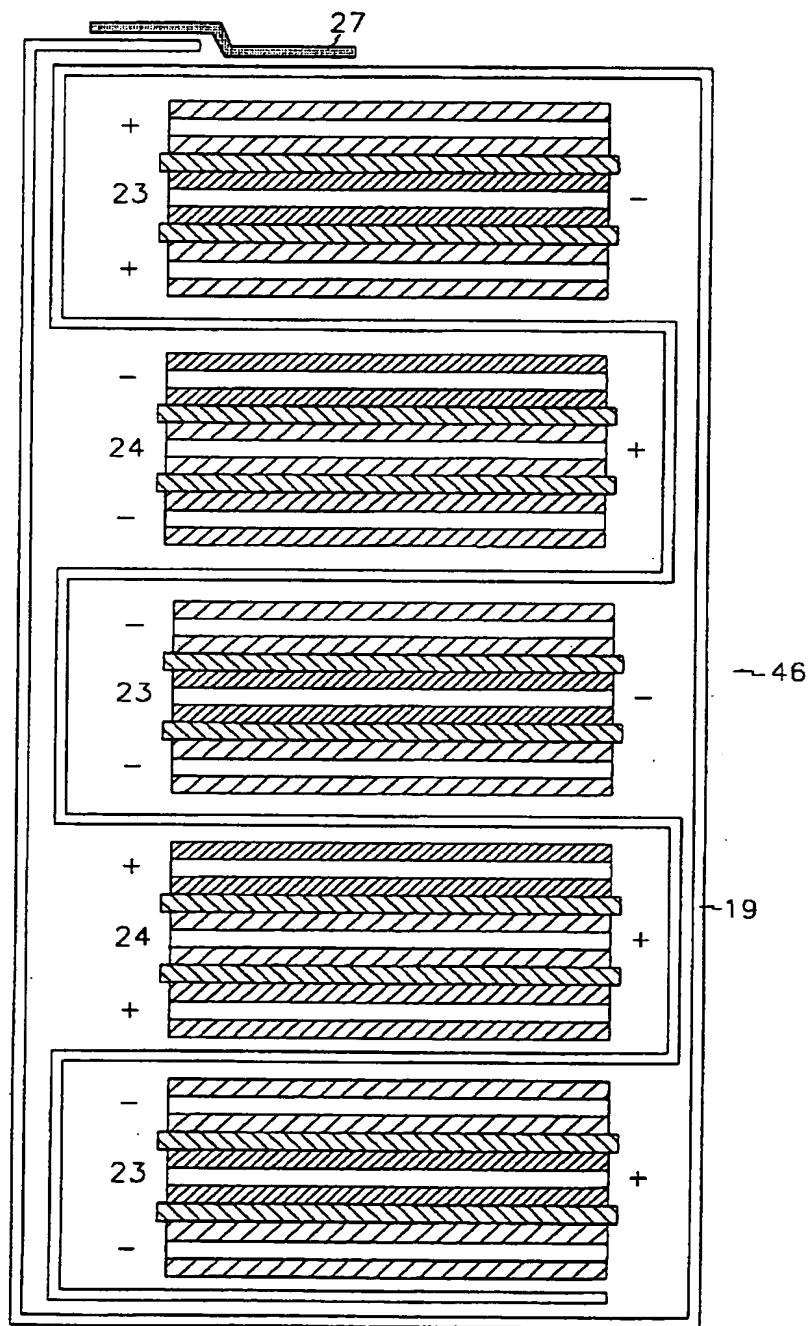


FIG.4B



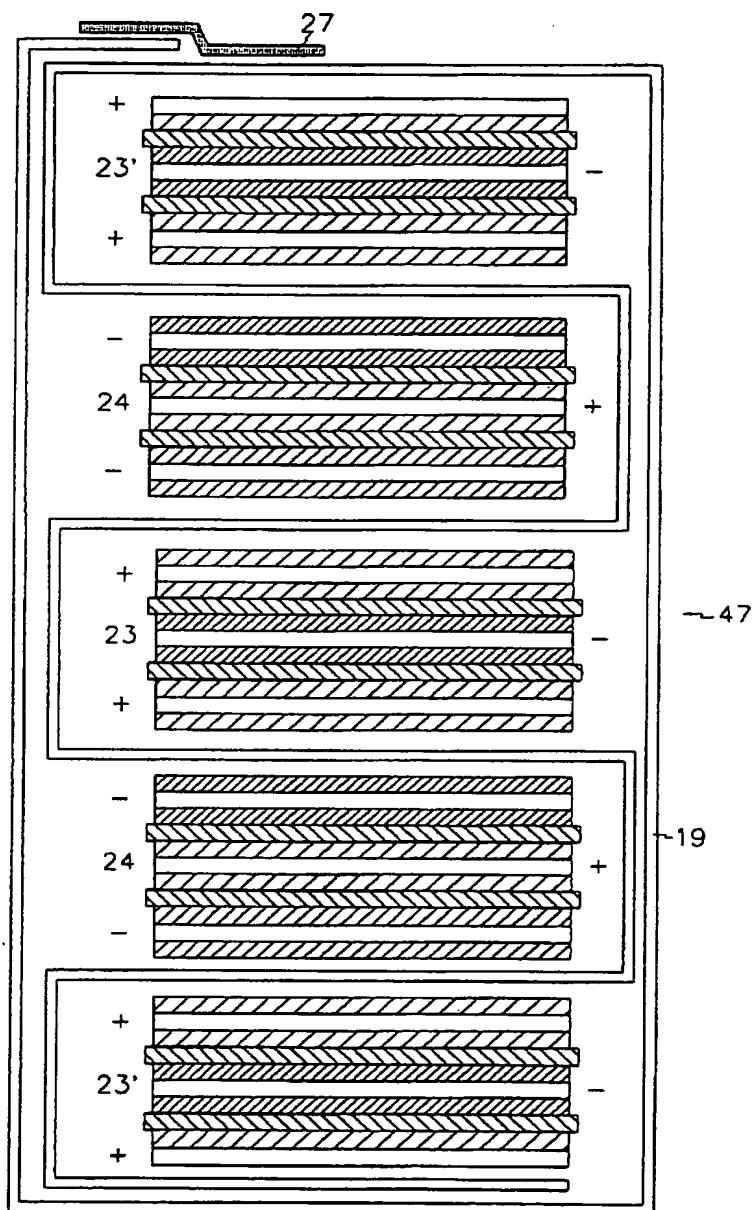
5 / 12

FIG.5



6 / 12

FIG.6



7 / 12

FIG.7A

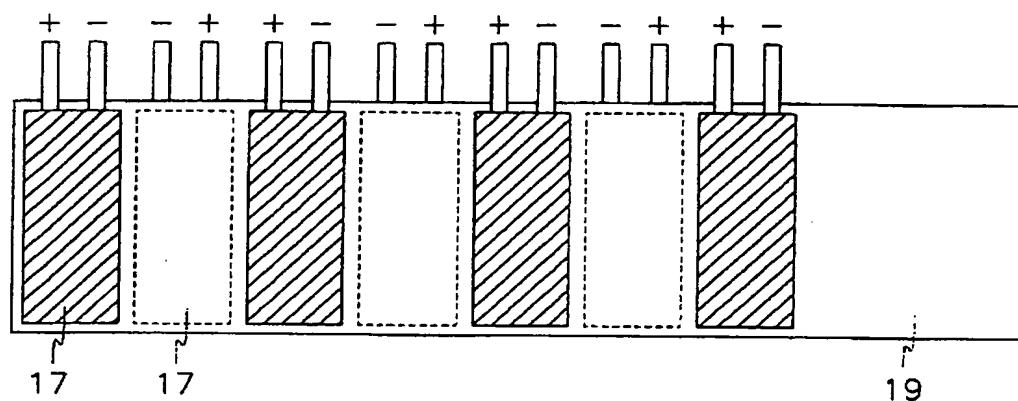
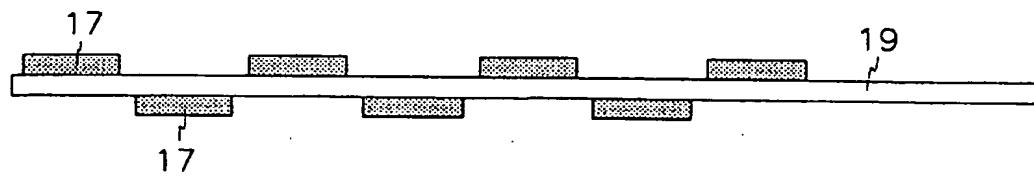
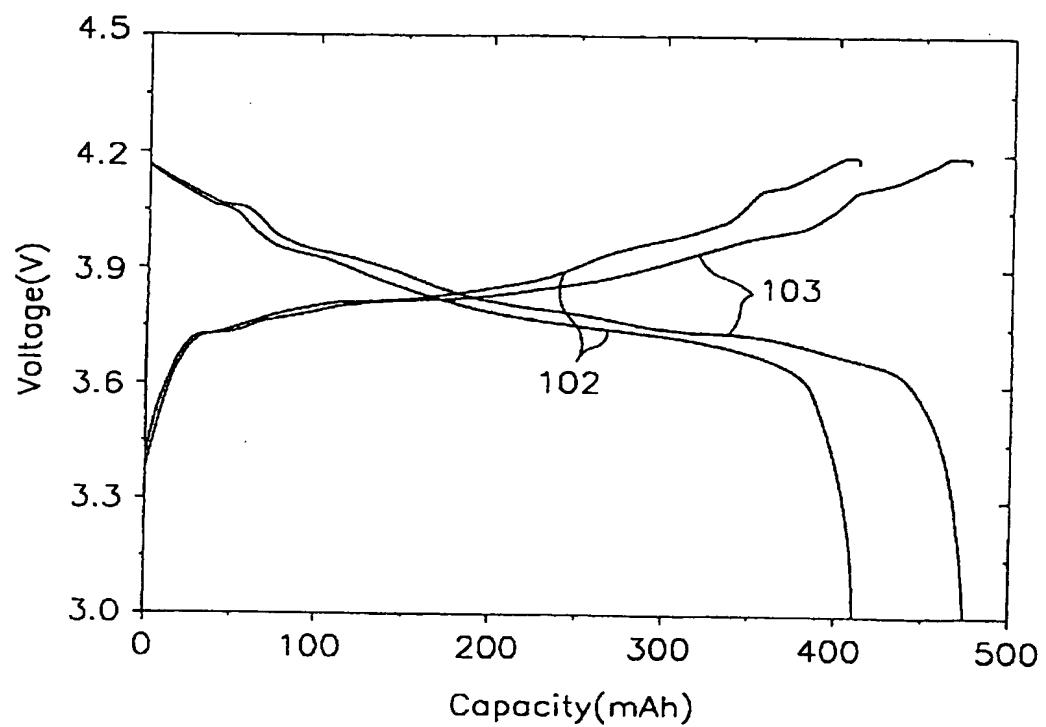


FIG.7B



8 / 12

FIG.8



9 / 12

FIG.9A

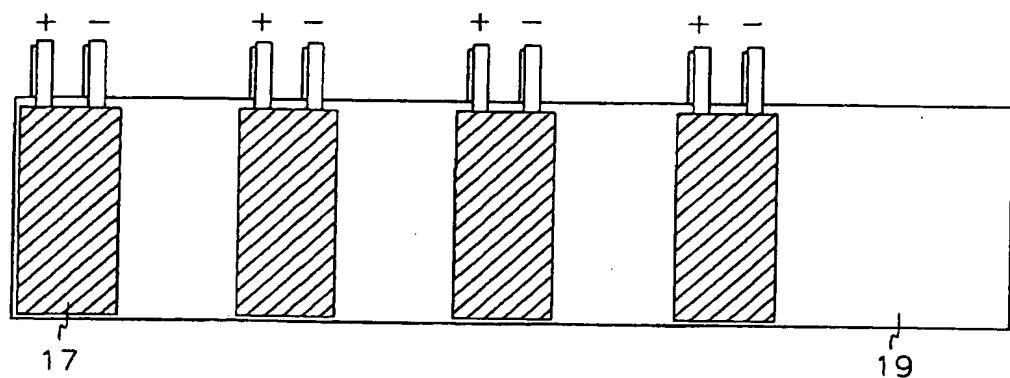
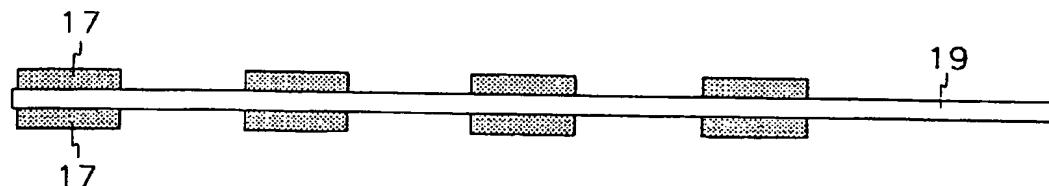


FIG.9B



10 / 12

FIG.10A

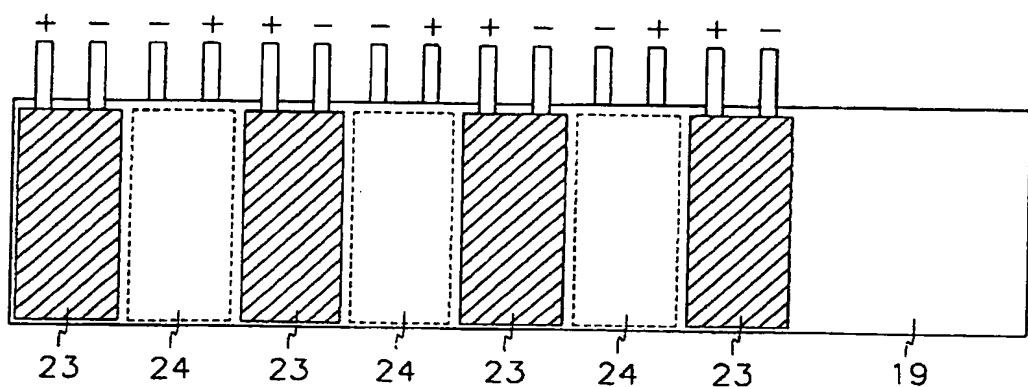
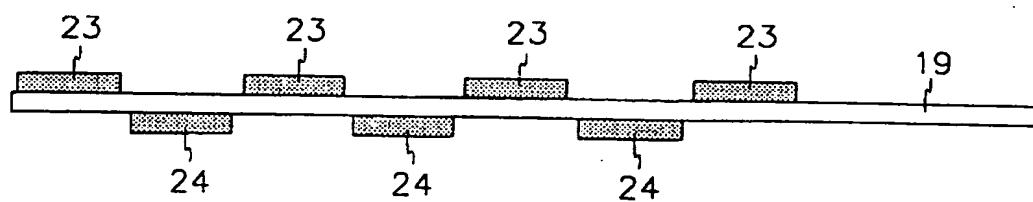
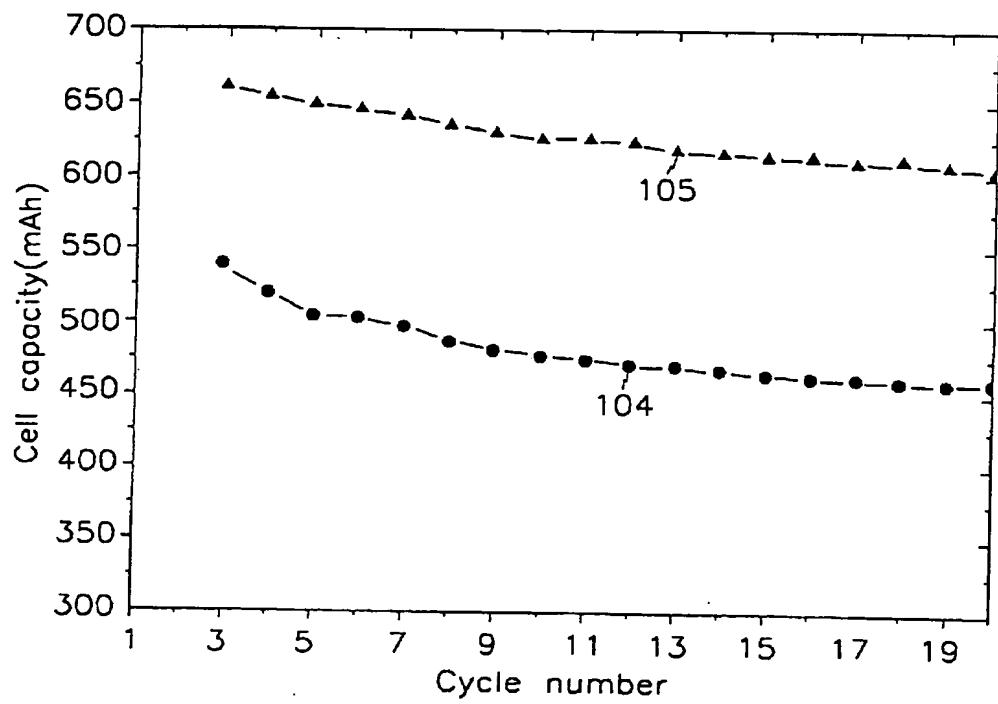


FIG.10B



11 / 12

FIG.11



12 / 12

FIG.12A

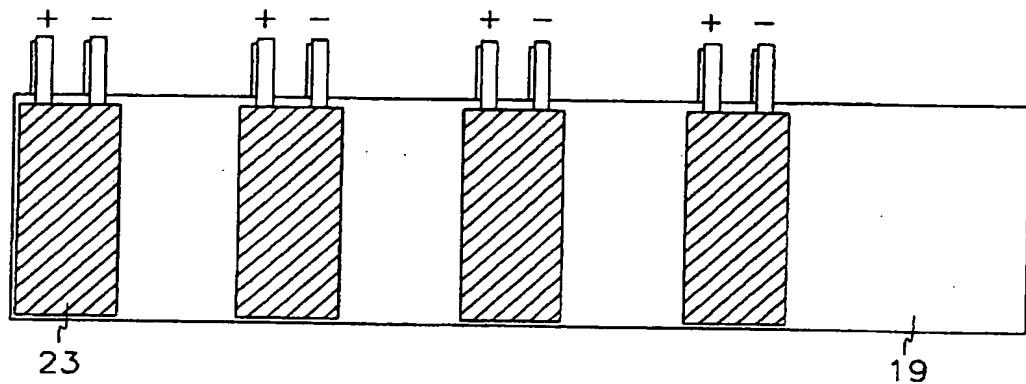
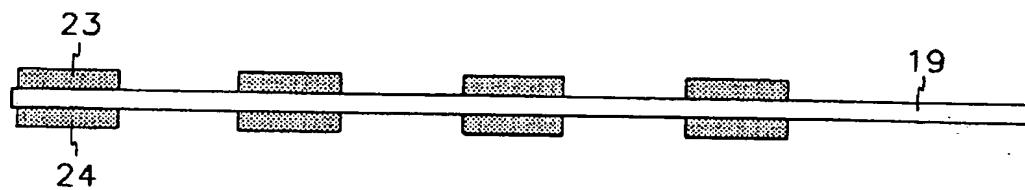


FIG.12B



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/KR01/00189

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC7 H01M 10/38

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC7 : H01M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
USPAT, FPD, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| A | US, A, 5300373 (VALENCE TECHNOLOGY, INC.) APR. 5, 1994 SEE FIG.3 - FIG.13 SEE ABSTRACT SEE CLAIM1 | 1-24 |
| A | US, A, 5498489 SEE FIG.2 SEE COLUMN2, LINE48 - COLUMN3, LINE45 | 1-24 |
| A | US, A, 5552239 (BELL COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH, INC.) SEP. 3, 1996 SEE FIG.2 - FIG.4 SEE CLAIM1 | 1-24 |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:
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 "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
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 "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
 "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

12 JUNE 2001 (12.06.2001)

Date of mailing of the international search report

15 JUNE 2001 (15.06.2001)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/KR

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